THE TRANSFORMERS

ALL HAIL MEGATRON

IDW

#13
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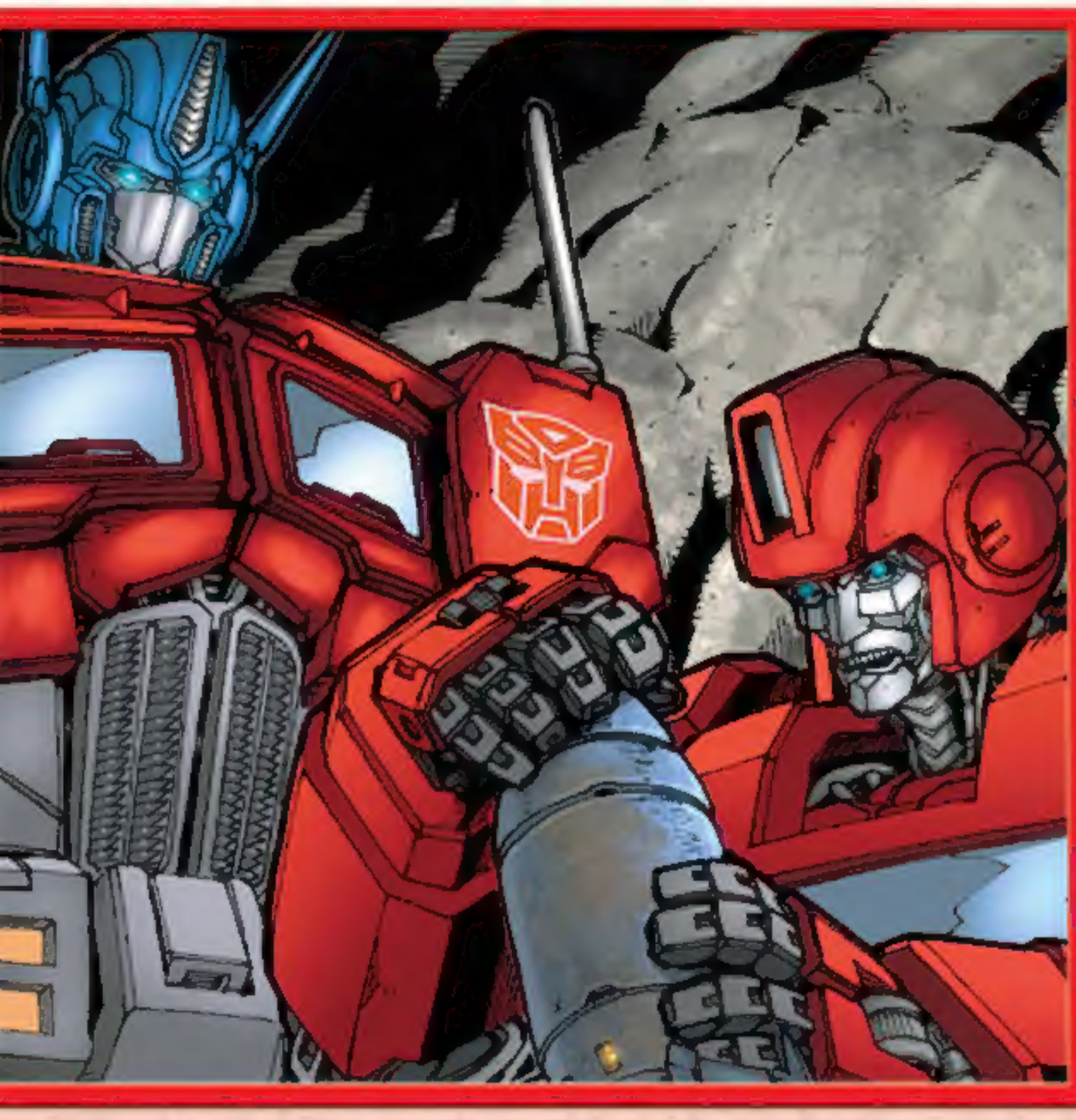
ALL HAIL MEGATRON #13



"OLD WAYS"

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OLD WAYS

I'M FINISHED. *DONE.*

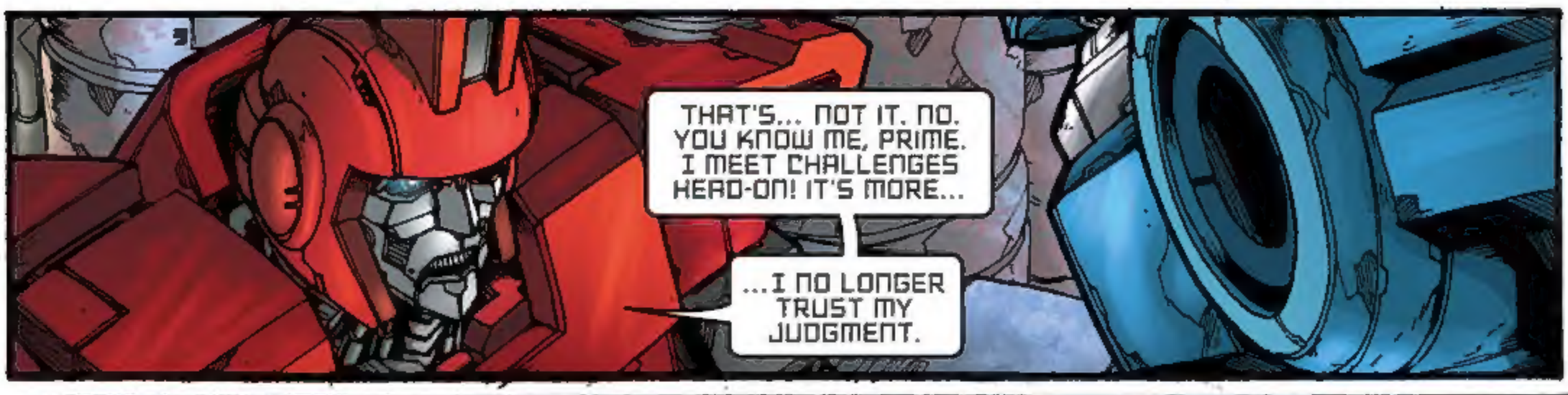
LIKE THIS OLD ORDNANCE, I'M READY TO BE STOOD DOWN. I'M OLD-SCHOOL, SET IN MY WAYS: AND BETWEEN YOU AND ME...

...I'M TIRED. I'VE BEEN DOING THIS TOO MANY METACYCLES. THE BATTLES, WARS, CAMPAIGNS... THEY'VE BECOME THIS ONE LONG, CONTINUOUS BLUR. I'VE LOST ALL SENSE OF WHO I AM, WHAT I ONCE WANTED.

IF THAT'S YOUR DECISION, *IRONHIDE*, I WON'T TRY TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.
I RESPECT YOU TOO MUCH FOR THAT.

OH.

IT'S A CHANGED WORLD WE NOW FACE, WITH MYRIAD NEW CHALLENGES. WE HAVE TO RE-LEARN, REASSESS, ADAPT.
I HAVE TO ADMIT, IT'S A DAUNTING PROSPECT.


THAT'S... NOT IT. NO. YOU KNOW ME, PRIME. I MEET CHALLENGES HEAD-ON! IT'S MORE...
...I NO LONGER TRUST MY JUDGMENT.
AH. THE BUSINESS WITH MIRAGE...
SORRY TO SAY, IRONHIDE, BUT YOU'VE *NEVER* BEEN MUCH OF A JUDGE OF CHARACTER.
AS I RECALL, YOU THOUGHT I WAS A WET-BEHIND-THE-AUDIO-RECEPTORS UPSTART WITH LITTLE OR NO RIGHT CALLING HIMSELF A *PRIME!*

AND I STAND BY THAT.

...HUBCAP, TRACKS, UNDERTOW, BRAINSTORM, TEMPEST...

...MOTORHEAD, CROSSHAIRS, BOXCAR...

QUITE THE, AH, ARMY YOU'VE ASSEMBLED, AND IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.

SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND, ER...

IRONHIDE. PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY, *SIR*.

DENIED.

NOW, IF YOU'D JUST LIKE TO STEP—

GRANTED.

WITH RESPECT, MOST OF YOUR "ARMY" HERE HAVE NEVER PICKED UP, LET ALONE FIRED, A WEAPON BEFORE. MOST OF THEM WILL DIE BEFORE THEY EVER DO! THEY ARE *NOT* SOLDIERS.

AND YOU, *SIR*, ARE UNLIKELY TO INCREASE THEIR ODDS OF SURVIVAL BY TELLING THEM THEY ARE.

ENOUGH—YOU'RE OUT OF LINE, IRONHIDE!

NO.

LET HIM SPEAK.

WE'RE AT *WAR*. MOTIVATIONAL WORDS OUT OF SOME PROTOCOL MANUAL AND A GLITZY PARADE AIN'T GONNA WIN IT.

IT'LL TAKE GUTS AND RESILIENCE, SHEER MILITARY MUSCLE AND KNOW-HOW. WE NEED A LEADER WHO'S BEEN IN TRENCHES, WHO'S FOUGHT AND, YES, KILLED FOR SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN A MEDAL.

AND WITH RESPECT, *SIR*...

...THAT'S *NOT* YOU.

UH. IRONHIDE HERE SERVED IN THE CYBERTRONIAN CIVIL MILITIA. HE'S... TAKEN HIS FAIR SHARE OF KNOCKS.

TO THE HEAD.

TEACH ME.

GOT TO SAY, THOUGH... YOU TOOK WHATEVER I THREW AT YOU, EVERY HARSH, DISPARAGING WORD. AND WHAT'S MORE...

...YOU *LEARNED.*

AH-HAH! YOU CATCH THE DECAYED ISOTOPE IN THESE SUCKERS AT JUST THE RIGHT HALF-LIFE MOMENT AND...

...IT'S LIKE ENERGON, ONLY WITH A *KICK!*

CHEERS!

DON'T MIND IF I DO.

AND YOU'D GO ON TO PROVE ME WRONG ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION...

NOW SEE, A LOT OF LEADERS WOULD HAVE HAD ME THROWN IN THE BRIG AND GONE THEIR OWN SWEET SUICIDAL WAY.

BUT NOT YOU. NO.

WE CAN'T STAY HERE.

AGREED.

WE NEED TO OUTFLANK THEIR POSITIONS. COUNTERATTACK FROM THE WEST.

NO.

NO?

WE'LL HEAD EAST. THE CORRIDOR WE CLEARED OF MINES EARLIER IS STILL OPEN TO US. WE CAN TAKE UP NEW POSITIONS IN POLYHEX.

NEW—? YOU'RE... RUNNING?

RETREATING.

WHY PIN US DOWN SO COMPREHENSIVELY AND YET LEAVE SUCH AN OBVIOUS VULNERABILITY? THEY *WANT* US TO GO WEST. IT'S A TRAP.

I RECONNOITRED THE WHOLE AREA MYSELF. I'M TELLING YOU, THERE'S NOTHING AND NO ONE THERE!

IN MY EXPERIENCE, IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT USUALLY IS.

YOUR "EXPERIENCE"? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

YOU TURN TAIL NOW AND THIS SECTOR'LL BE OVERRUN, LOST. YOU'RE DISHONORING EVERY AUTOBOT WHO LAID DOWN HIS LIFE DEFENDING IT.

GIVE THE ORDER. IF YOU CAN'T, I'LL FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL.

WE GO EAST.

DOUBLE-TIME IT! C'MON!

MOVEMENT— FORTY-SIX KLIKS WEST!

"IT'S...

"...TRYPTICON!"

EVERYTHING I BROUGHT TO THE BATTLEFIELD CAME FROM YOU, IRONHIDE. YOU GAVE ME ALL THE TOOLS I NEEDED. BUT WHAT I KNEW INSTINCTIVELY...

...IS THERE ARE SOME BATTLES YOU CAN'T WIN, TIMES WHEN IT'S BETTER TO SIMPLY CUT YOUR LOSSES...

...AND LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.

HM. IF WE'RE GOING TO START THROWING AROUND PLATITUDES, I NEED ANOTHER—*WHOA!*

STEADY, IRONHIDE. PERHAPS WE SHOULD SWITCH TO SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS ... FISSIONABLE.

YEAH, M-MAYBE.

IF YOU HAVE A WEAKNESS, IRONHIDE, IT'S THAT YOU MEET *EVERYTHING* HEAD-ON.

HA! ARE YOU CALLING ME STUBBORN?

EH, MAYBE I AM AT THAT. BUT YOU...

...YOU CAN BE EVERY *BIT* AS UNBENDING!

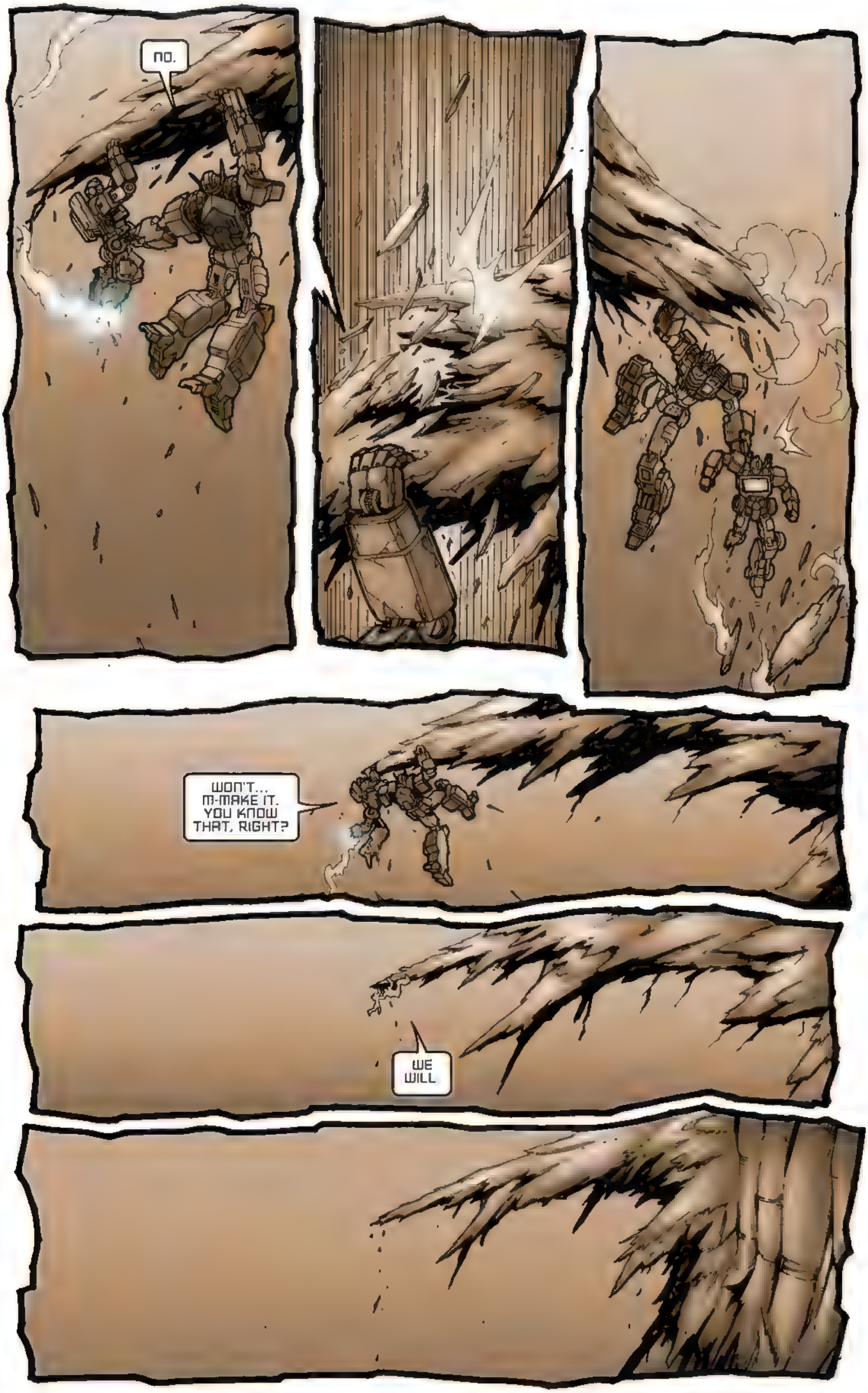
PRIME!

HURT... BAD. BOOBY TRAP—

TRY NOT TO SPERK. DOWN HERE, EVEN A WHISPER IS MAGNIFIED A HUNDREDFOLD.

AND THIS LEDGE... WON'T SUPPORT US FOR LONG AS IT IS.

GO! LEAVE ME.


no.
WON'T... M-MAKE IT. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
WE WILL

YOUR EXAMPLE HONED ME INTO THE WARRIOR... THE LEADER... I AM TODAY, IRONHIDE. *YOU* INSPIRED ME TO OVERCOME IMPOSSIBLE ODDS.

JUST AS NOW...

...*OTHER* AUTOBOTS LOOK TO YOU FOR YOUR BRAND OF NO-NONSENSE, PRACTICAL KNOW-HOW... THE DEPTHS OF RESOLVE AND INDOMITABLE FIGHTING SPIRIT WE SO DESPERATELY NEED.

AND STILL, IF EVER I WAVER, IT'S YOUR COUNSEL I SEEK, YOUR TELL-IT-LIKE-IT-IS, HARD-NOSED HONESTY.

IF YOU GO, WE'LL CARRY ON, BUT WE'LL *ALL* BE LESSENED BY YOUR ABSENCE. AND I...

...WILL MISS MY GOOD AND TRUSTED FRIEND.

HM. TACTICALLY OUTMANEUVERED BY MY MILITARY PROTÉGÉ! CAN'T EXACTLY EXIT ON THAT NOTE, NOW CAN I?

GUESS I'M JUST GONNA *HAVE* TO STICK AROUND...

END.

SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH.

STARSCREAM. .

I ASKED NOT TO BE DISTURBED, *SHRAPNEL.*

THERE'S... NEWS

TAKE ME THERE IMMEDIATELY.

CLANG.

DON'T WORRY, MY SOLDIERS TODAY IS *NOT* A DAY OF SADNESS, BUT CELEBRATION.

FOR THOUGH ONE MIGHTY WARRIOR LEAVES US, IN HIS MEMORY WE FORGE A *NEW* PATH. TODAY IS A DAY THAT WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED.

THE DAY THAT *MEGATRON* CEASED TO FUNCTION.

UNEASY LIES THE HEAD

INCORRECT. MEGATRON'S SPARK SURVIVES.

WHAT?! I WAS TOLD THERE WAS NEWS!

YEAH. HIS BRAIN ACTIVITY HAS INCREASED TO 400 PETRA-CYCLES PER SECOND. THAT'S UP TO TEN PERCENT CAPACITY.

WE SENT SHRAPNEL TO GET YOU IMMEDIATELY.

SOUNDWAVE. YOU WERE MEGATRON'S MOST LOYAL, MOST TRUSTED ADVISOR. YOUR SERVICE IS TO BE COMMENDED.

YOUR COLD LOGIC IS WHAT MADE YOU SO INVALUABLE TO HIM. AND IT IS WHAT I, AS HIS *SUCCESSOR*, REQUIRE OF YOU NOW.

CONSIDER THE ENERGON WASTED SUSTAINING THIS IRREPARABLY DAMAGED SHELL AT LESS THAN TEN PERCENT CAPACITY.

THINK INSTEAD HOW THAT COULD BE UTILIZED TO BULWARK YOUR NEW LEADER TO BLAZE TOWARD A NEW DAWN FOR *ALL* DECEPTICONS.

IT'S AN ACADEMIC MATTER OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION. NO ONE DECEPTICON IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE CAUSE. AND THE CAUSE NEEDS *ENERGON*.

NEGATIVE. MEGATRON FUNCTIONS.

YOUR LOYALTY WILL *SURELY* BE REMEMBERED, SOUNDWAVE. YOUR REWARD WILL NOT BE LONG IN COMING, I ASSURE YOU.

AS LONG AS MEGATRON FUNCTIONS, I WILL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO LEAD.

AND IF IT TOOK ALL THE ENERGON WE HAD TO KEEP HIS HUSK AT ONLY FIVE PERCENT POWER, HIS LOYALISTS WOULD GLADLY SPEND IT ON THAT RATHER THAN THE REST OF US, WHO COULD ACTUALLY USE IT.

MAY I SUGGEST ANOTHER OPTION? PERHAPS MYSELF OR ANOTHER INSECTICON COULD FIND A WAY TO SIPHON THE ENERGON FOR—

NO. ASSASSINATION IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH SOUNDWAVE AND HIS DERANGED CHILDREN KEEPING CONSTANT VIGIL.

I'D JUST CEREMONIOUSLY JETTISON HIS BODY OUT THE AIRLOCK IF I DIDN'T HAVE A NAGGING FEELING HE'D SOMEHOW RETURN, EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN BEFORE.

THIS... REQUIRES THOUGHT. LEAVE ME.

VERY SHORTLY WE'LL ARRIVE AT OUR DESTINATION, AND *RAZORCLAW* WILL IMMEDIATELY CHALLENGE MY RIGHT TO ABSOLUTE RULE.

IN THE BEST-CASE SCENARIO, I'LL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN MY SEEKERS AND COMMAND OF THIS RAGTAG BUNCH, AND THE DECEPTICONS WILL CONTINUE AS A GROUP OF DISORGANIZED, IN-FIGHTING FACTIONS.

WITHOUT A LEADER, THE CAUSE IS LOST. MEGATRON HAD HIS MOMENT, AND IS NOW NOT *MY* HOUR? I FOLLOWED HIM TO THE BITTER END—THE END I ALWAYS FORESAW: FAILURE.

HE LEFT US WITH ONLY GRUDGES... AND *THIS.*

THIS USELESS BAUBLE.

MEGATRON HID THE FACT THAT HE HAD IT FROM ALL BUT MYSELF AND SOUNDWAVE, AND AFTER HAVING STUDIED IT FOR SEVERAL CYCLES, I CAN NOW SEE WHY.

SUPPOSEDLY SOME DEVICE OF ULTIMATE POWER... IT IS ULTIMATELY *USELESS*. WHATEVER POWER IT HAD IS GONE. I DOUBT IT EVER HAD ANY AT ALL.

THIS WAS HIS MASTERSTROKE? HE MIGHT JUST AS SOON HAVE STOLEN ONE OF PRIME'S SPARE TIRES.

OF COURSE HE TOLD NO ONE. THEY WOULD HAVE LAUGHED.

I SHOULD RID MYSELF OF THIS THING. IT MOCKS ME. IT'S THE SYMBOL OF EVERY FAILURE. EVERY VICTORY TURNED TO SLAG.

ONE OF THE GARBAGE CHUTES WILL BE A FITTING END FOR THIS REFUSE. THEN WE CAN FINALLY—

STARSCREAM...

...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I... I WAS SUDDENLY OVERCOME WITH THE URGE TO VENT THIS INTO SPACE.

STARSCREAM... THAT'S THE *AUTOBOT MATRIX*. ARE YOU *INSANE?*

I... IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH A GOOD IDEA.

THAT'S THE MATRIX OF LEADERSHIP! IT'S THE AUTOBOT'S MOST IMPORTANT ARTIFACT! WHICHEVER OF THEM IT CHOOSES IS THEIR UNDISPUTED LEADER. WITHOUT IT...

...HOW DID *YOU* GET IT?

WELL, SHRAPNEL...

...I BELIEVE I'VE BEEN CHOSEN.

MY FELLOW DECEPTICONS! IT IS WITH GREAT PRIDE AND RELISH I ADDRESS YOU TODAY, *NOT* FROM THE VALLEY OF DEFEAT... BUT APPROACHING ONCE AGAIN THE SUMMIT OF *VICTORY!*

IN WHAT IS ONLY THE FIRST IN A LONG STRING OF TRIUMPHS, I HAVE SUCCESSFULLY *UNLOCKED* THE AUTOBOT MATRIX! WRESTED FROM OUR ENEMIES, I, YOUR LEADER, NOW WIELD ITS ALMOST *LIMITLESS* POWER!

DESTINY HAS CHOSEN ME—HAS CHOSEN *US*—TO LIGHT THIS DARKEST HOUR! I RETIRE NOW TO PLAN OUR NEXT CONQUEST.

HAIL STARSCREAM!

HAIL! HAIL!

HAIL! HAIL!

HAIL! HAIL!

THE END.